

VALLEY STAR

THE INDEPENDENT STUDENT NEWSPAPER OF LOS ANGELES VALLEY COLLEGE

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It's YOUR Newspaper

Gas Prices Skyrocket, Students Ditch Cars

BY JOE LA FLEUR
SPECIAL TO THE STAR

According to the Department of Energy's weekly survey of service stations, the average price of gasoline has hit an average of \$3.892 per gallon in California, a record. Students at Valley College are faced with a familiar question: How high will gasoline prices rise before a change in transportation method is made?

"It cost me \$90 to fill up my gas tank think weekend," said Valley student Marcos Jara. "I don't know if I can continue to afford much more than that."

The rise in the price of gasoline is no new topic. For months, jaws have dropped as the cost at the pump has continued to rise. However, a new semester approaches and the price of crude oil, which accounts for 70 percent of the cost of making gasoline, has only been going up. The commodity recently closed at a record \$122 a barrel.

If the trend continues, students will be faced with paying the cost of tuition, books and now elevated gas prices, which have already hit \$4 in some locations throughout Los Angeles and the San Fernando Valley.

"I'll have to cut down on how often I drive myself to school and take the bus more," said Brett Neuner, a full-time Valley student. "When I do drive, I figure I can stay at school in between my classes as opposed to going home."

Alternate transportation options for students include the Metro Orange Line, which stops near the corner of Burbank and Fulton Avenues. Students can make their way to many Los Angeles and Valley spots with a \$5 for a day pass. Students have also begun to carpool and pump their pedals.

"I recently bought a bike that I use to get to school," said

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SPRING WEDDING ON HOLD

PAUL OLDEN, PHOTO EDITOR / VALLEY STAR

A sure way to bring attention to your cause is to put on a wedding dress, make a nifty sign and have an American flag nearby. That was the case May 1 in downtown Los Angeles for the annual march of supporters for immigration reform. An estimated 8,500 people marched and chanted slogans. Organizers hoped to revive the debate on laws regarding the deportation of illegal immigrants and possible amnesty for illegals already in America.

Valley College - A Place for Friends

BY ELIZEDA BELTRAN
STAFF WRITER

Valley College is looking to add fans and friends with its new Facebook and upcoming MySpace pages, which are tailored to reach current students, attract prospective students, and keep alumni up to date with their alma mater.

"Going into the social networking site is, I think, a great way of reaching our students, reaching prospective students," said Jennifer Fong, Valley's public relations specialist. "It's another way of the connecting and feeling as part of the community for Valley College."

MySpace is the largest online social networking site, and according to Facebook's pressroom, their site has more than 70 million active users.

Although Valley's MySpace

page is still in the works, its Facebook is already up and going and the campus already has gained 18 fans.

The page offers students who have an account with the site general information about the campus, such as degree programs, upcoming events and news, as well as discussion boards and photos. MySpace will contain the same information once the profile is complete.

"It is a good way of connecting people who are in different classes," said Luke Spink, a Valley graduate. "It's one way of really bringing them together, and informing them about what is going on . . . and creating a greater sense of awareness."

Bethany Bodin, a Valley student and Myspace member, likes the idea, but also weighs

the good and the bad about Valley entering the social network sphere.

"I think it is a good idea, but I also think that in a way, it kind of opens up for maybe some negativity in people, badmouthing classmates, students, teachers, stuff like that. But also, MySpace is good if you miss notes in class, or if you have questions about anything, so it's also good in that aspect."

Although Bodin wouldn't consider using the sites, she would like to "definitely [see] updated classes, what's available, certificate programs, what you can do to transfer, financial aid, basically everything that is on LAVC page, but maybe not in so much more depth, just easier ways to find things."

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Nazi Memories Recounted by Camp Survivors

BY KRISTEN BECKER
EDITOR IN CHIEF

Mary Bauer and Zinon Neumark were both teenagers when the Nazis overran their respective home countries of Hungary and Poland. The two, now in their 80s, shared their very different stories of survival with students and members of the community at Valley College April 30. The forum's organizers chose the date because it was the eve of Yom HaShoah, the day the Jewish community worldwide remembers those who died in the Nazi death camps.

"None of the readings you can do and none of the lectures you can hear from someone such as myself, who know this material somewhat, can basically compete with those who lived through and have memories of [the Holocaust], and a promise to those who are no longer here, tell their story," said Zev Garber, professor of Jewish studies and philosophy

at Valley.

Bauer's story is similar to the accounts of the Holocaust that many of us are accustomed to hearing - she endured life in three different concentration camps, including the most infamous, Auschwitz, before being liberated by Russian troops in May of 1945.

"It was plenty difficult to absorb that people can do this to each other, that people can [do this], just . . . because they call you different," Bauer said. "Remember, at this time in Europe, physically you didn't look different, you only had a different religion. You only had a different belief."

Neumark shares his experience because it is one that is less common than Bauer's. "I know that my story is different from most stories and less known and even historians do not include, or, if they do include, they distort a lot, but there are not many of us who did survive that way,"

see *Holocaust* page 7



MANYA MARTIROSYAN / VALLEY STAR

FROM A VOTER'S VIEWPOINT - Holocaust survivor Mary Bauer relives some memories from her time spent in Nazi concentration camps. Bauer spoke at Valley April 30 during a forum to commemorate the liberation of thousands of Jews from the death camps.

United Nations is the Next Step for Alumni

BY SHANNON MCHUGH
STAFF WRITER

Just as a new student council is about to take office at Valley College, a former alumni and Associated Student Union president, Armen Orujyan has been appointed as the sole person from the United States to become an e-Leader for the United Nations.

Orujyan, who was Valley's student body president in 1998, was chosen out of ten candidates to serve a two-year term as an e-Leader for the UN Committee on Information and Communication Technologies and Youth Programs. During his tenure, he will be working toward advancing communication technologies for youths and helping the UN in eradicating poverty worldwide.

"I am considered an expert in developing and helping the commission engage with youth based on my previous experience with the Alliance Toward Harnessing Global Opportunities," Orujyan said. "And I plan to do that by developing young

people through socially constructive initiatives."

Through his work as co-founder and chairman of ATHGO, an organization designed to train young people in the work of social entrepreneurship, he already has a significant amount of experience in working with programs to get youths ready for a job as a diplomat or entrepreneur.

see *Alum* page 7



PAUL OLDEN, PHOTO EDITOR / VALLEY STAR
Former Valley College student Armen Orujyan now works for the United Nations.

The strongest bond of human sympathy outside the family relation should be one uniting working people of all nations and tongues and kindreds.

~ Abraham Lincoln



SCOTT MITCHELL / VALLEY STAR

WELCOME DIVERSITY - Florentino Manzano, Al Amaray and Tracy Bachman, L to R, highlight the diversity issues on campus during a discussion panel at "A Day of Solidarity."

Diversity, Commonality Focus of Panel Discussion

BY ASTRID SEIPELT
NEWS EDITOR

Within any college community, there are many groups of students that we may never have met before. The fear of the unknown can lead to misunderstandings and tension between these groups, instead of acceptance.

The LAVC Diversity Committee presented a Day of Solidarity on Thursday, where approximately 70 people attended a panel discussion on diversity issues and challenges that affect the college.

The panel was comprised of Valley College faculty members and students, representing many different ethnic backgrounds. The seven panelists tackled a range of issues such as age differences within the student body; protected groups, including Lesbian,

Gay, Bisexual and Transgendered students, different races and religions.

Protected groups are classes of people that are protected by law against discrimination, ranging from a federal level to district board rule.

College President Tyree Wieder said that the differences in the student body make Valley what it is.

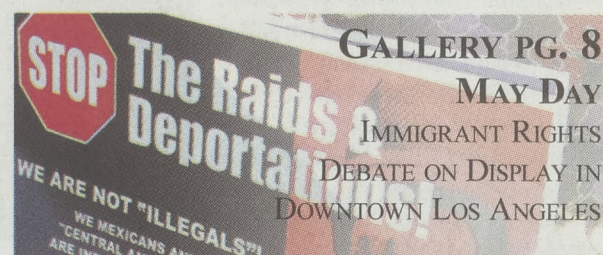
"There are so many people in classes that you don't see in your daily life; they're not part of your family and they're not part of your neighborhood...that's what's so great about a campus like this," she said.

Walter Jones, assistant director of extended opportunity programs and services said that educating people on campus about their differences was why the solidarity day was organized.

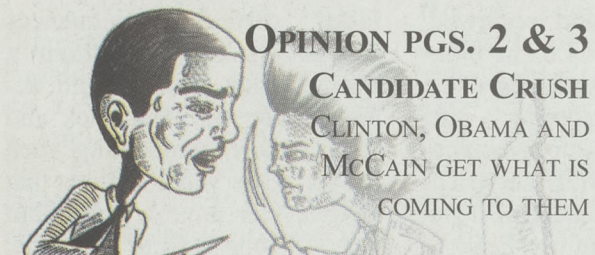
see *Diversity* page 7



SPORTS PG. 6
MAKE A SPLASH
VALLEY DIVERS BRING
HOME MEDALS FROM
STATE CHAMPIONSHIPS



GALLERY PG. 8
MAY DAY
IMMIGRANT RIGHTS
DEBATE ON DISPLAY IN
DOWNTOWN LOS ANGELES



OPINION PGS. 2 & 3
CANDIDATE CRUSH
CLINTON, OBAMA AND
MCCAIN GET WHAT IS
COMING TO THEM



VALLEY LIFE PG. 5
SHOP 'TIL YOU DROP
AMERICANA AT BRAND
OFFERS THE ULTIMATE
SHOPPING EXPERIENCE

OPINION

ONE WAY OR ANOTHER

Grand Theft Decency

By SHANNON MCHUGH
STAFF WRITER

What would the world be like if children, starting at age 13, began stealing cars, driving around the city shooting at passersby, picking up prostitutes, and beating the living daylights out of people just walking down the street?

Sounds over the top, right? The truth is that this scenario is not far off in the world we live in. Children and adults alike of this generation alike are participating in these activities almost daily in a newly accepted segment of a child's life: their virtual life. People use virtual realities in games such as Mortal Kombat, Grand Theft Auto, and Doom to do things that award you with points and advancing to new levels; acts that people in the actual reality condemn.

The problem with allowing people access to these types of violent behaviors is that the constant barrage of violent visuals has a prolonged impact of increased aggression that goes beyond the virtual screen and enters the real world.

"Violent video games provide a forum for learning and practicing aggressive solutions to conflict situations," said Dr. Craig Anderson, who completed a study of violent behavior and video games in the Journal of Personality and Social Psychology. "In the short run, playing a violent video game appears to affect aggression by priming aggressive thoughts. Longer-term effects are likely to be longer lasting as well, as the player learns and practices new aggression-related scripts that can become more and more accessible for use when real-life conflict situations arise."

Both Anderson and fellow psychologist Dr. Karen Dill have

researched the matter in a study that determined the chance of real-life violence resulting from a video game. They surveyed college students for their real-life study and found that the students who participated in the more aggressive video games had participated in more excessively violent behavior than the others.

That study shows that even college students can be affected by their time spent playing graphic video games, and, as adults are they're the ones that have supposedly gotten past their days of being impressionable and vulnerable to the inability to decide right and wrong; what does that mean for children who play these same games?

In a world where it has become commonplace that school shootings are happening almost daily and students are plotting how to blow up their schools in full detail, doesn't it seem a little strange that people are questioning the correlation of this and graphic images in video games and television?

When children, sometimes as young as 5 years old, grow up seeing blood splatter all over their television screens, there is no doubt

that these things seem as normal as a dinner around the kitchen table with family used to be not too long ago.

The Entertainment Software Rating Board (ESRB) can try all they want to place symbols on video games to try to ensure that the right age groups are exempt from playing

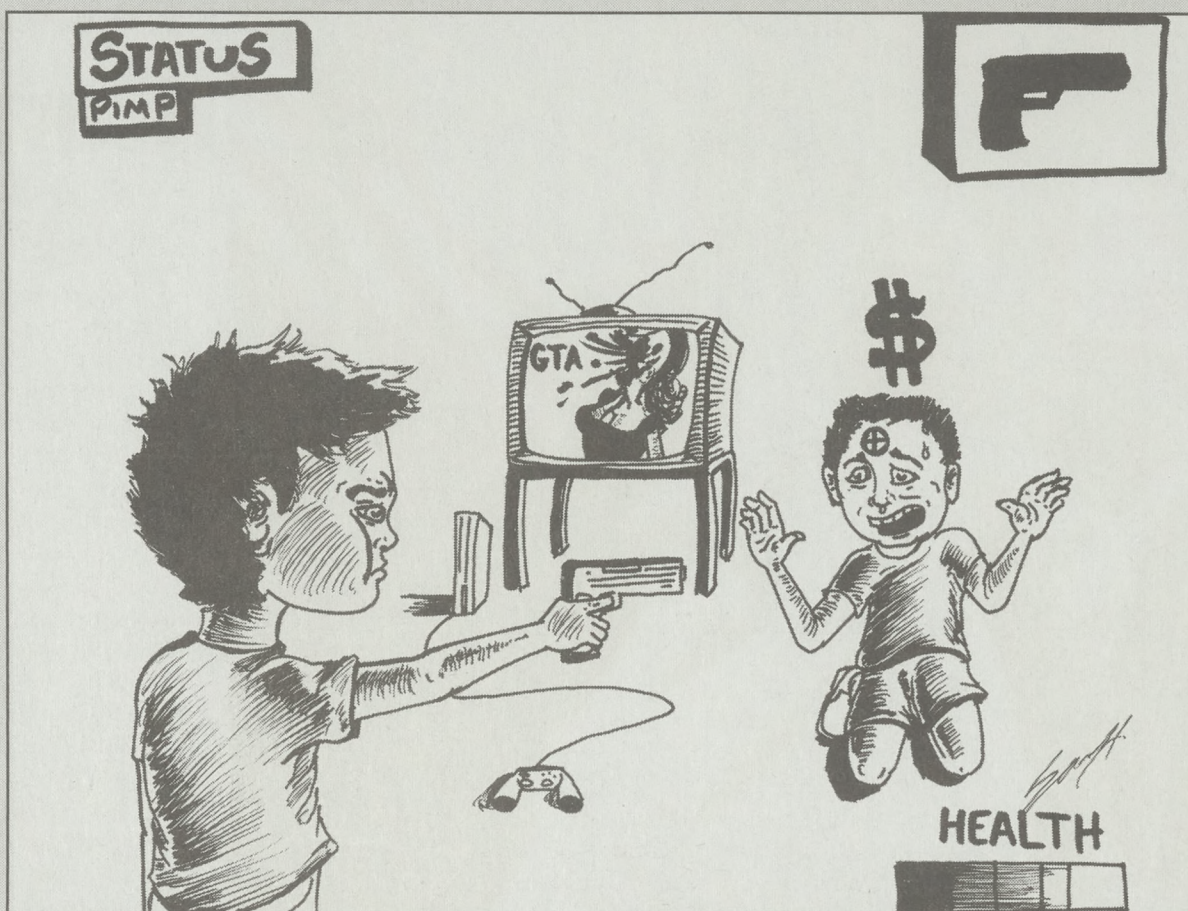


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the violent games, but the ESRB is not walking into every home and making sure that negligent parents are enforcing their standards.

Our daily lives are not far from seeing children carrying semi-automatic rifles and shooting up their elementary schools if something isn't done to try to make parents understand the importance of keeping intense and violent video games out of reach of their children.

By JOSH SPENCE
VALLEY LIFE EDITOR

The recent release of "Grand Theft Auto IV" has once again sparked the antiquated debate of graphic content and where it applies to video games. While it may

and it is not a joke," MADD said in a statement. "Drunk driving is a choice, a violent crime, and it is also 100 percent preventable." True, drunk driving is a choice and 100 percent preventable, but it is also a choice in GTA IV.

What MADD has failed to point out or hasn't discovered, is that Niko, the main character has the choice to drive drunk or not. When Niko makes the decision to drive drunk, the vision is blurred onscreen, it's harder to maneuver the car (hot-wired or not), thus more prone to get in accidents and more likely to receive some unwanted attention from the police. GTA IV is not promoting drunk driving as much as it is portraying real life situations.

If MADD chooses to believe that reasoning to be a copout (it's not), that's fine but they cannot arguably say that the game is being irresponsible.

Would MADD prefer having Niko able to drive his hotwired car drunk with pinpoint precision? What message would that send to all the underage minors virtually ghost riding the whip while whacking prostitutes?

Niko's pursuit of the American dream, and the rude awakening that is a result of his pursuit, is

what causes him to turn to drugs and violence, which in turn leads to more urban decay. It's a social science lesson learned firsthand without physically experiencing it.

GTA IV is not a conventional educational tool by any means, but to blame a game for mirroring the society we live in today is unacceptable. Drugs, sex and violence permeate our everyday life, so it's obvious it would infiltrate video games. If it sends an alarming message to people, maybe they should examine the source material. We live in a society where "hostile takeover" is still applied as a business term, but now involve private military companies to assist in our proxy wars. Maybe we should start there.

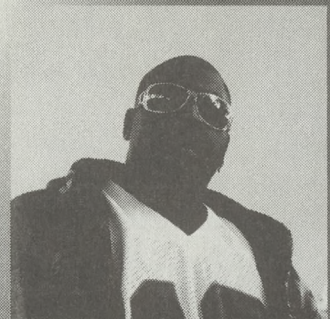
Today's video games are so beautifully designed that we need to start thinking of video game content the way we do cinema.

Do we look at classic films as "Taxi Driver," "Goodfellas," "Casino," "Pulp Fiction" or "Reservoir Dogs" and deride them for their violence? We have come to accept violence if it serves as a deeper meaning for the film. We should be able to apply that model to video games, considering the recent innovations within the medium.

Amid all the senseless video games involving corporate mascots fighting each other, endless hordes of zombies or a plumber traveling across the universe, we should not condemn one of the few games that carries a legitimate message. Yes, it's bloody and violent and perverse, but eliminating the game won't eliminate the mindset. People need to be the change what they want to see; attacking a video game will not cure everything.

CAMPUS View

photos by Juan Robles / Valley Star



"I don't think it's a good idea, it's not good for the kids. It's like violent movies, bad images being portrayed. It's not good for the kids."

-Shawn Porter, business



"I don't think most people take it seriously, it's just a game. They're a good release, recreation. Some people get release from it from a hard day."

-Margot Tamula, nursing



"I'm fine with them, as long as they're not for kids. It sets bad examples for people, it encourages people to be violent against other people."

-Patty Baer, sociology



"There shouldn't be any problem overall, but unfortunately you see little kids playing. It is a form of entertainment, and people are entitled to anything they like."

-Ignacio De La Cruz, biology

How do you feel about violent video games?

Invest in Contraceptives

By SHEILA KOOCHAK
STAFF WRITER

Being a parent in today's society is not something to take lightly. Just as getting married (which requires a license) carries serious thought and questioning, so should having a child. There needs to be laws to keep just anyone from being able to procreate.

People must have a license or permit to drive; own a boat or a business; go fishing; do home renovations; and even to cut hair, but one can create a human life, whenever, without any form of instruction or registration.

A 16-year-old on crystal meth can pop out children and be expected to raise the baby, or the women who go on Maury to find their baby's daddy because the list is so long, when they have no business having children.

My suggested requirements are: To obtain a license to have a child, applicants must be at least 21 years old. They should attend mandatory classes for the upbringing of a child; their plans on discipline and how to approach the different life situations with their child; and whether one is mentally, emotionally, psychologically and financially stable as well as being mature enough to handle real-life situations.

A final course for you and your spouse, if married, would be to spend six months fostering an android infant that is programmed for diarrhea, endless crying without any detectable reason, burping, rashes and waking up countless times throughout the night. The android records everything that occurred and after six months, it is collected and reviewed.

A person needs to be emotionally healthy and secure in a career before becoming a parent, as well as know how to deal with the daily sacrifices needed to be successful. But understanding that just because

someone has a piece of paper stating they took classes does not mean that they would apply what they learned from the class. That's exactly why there should be a continuous assessment after obtaining the license throughout the years until the child turns 18.

The decisive step in the process would be one-on-one counseling with a professional to see how prepared prospective parents are in every aspect. The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services would take all information received and other important factors into consideration while deciding who has the right to bear a child at that point.

It sounds kind of controlling to give the ultimate decision to the government since it has a lot of power already, but let's face it, some of these people couldn't make an intelligent decision if it shouted, "Pick me! Pick me!"

So what would be the consequence for those who bear a child too soon? Well, a proposition would be created with options and voters may choose the one option that they feel is the best. But what happens to those who get pregnant without a license? Are they supposed to abort or give up the child? Although a bit irrational, if the consequences were extremely harsh, people might heave second thoughts about child bearing.

If prospective parents had to go through the rigorous screening that adoptive parents must go through, not as many people would bring babies into this world without carefully considering it. If people faced severe consequences for having babies without a license, then some would actually take one step back and think before committing such an act. One must realize that anyone can have a child, but not everyone is fit to raise one.

Sultry Starlet Scandal

By ASTRID SEIPELT
NEWS EDITOR

Take one teen superstar, mix with a Vanity Fair photo shoot, then leak the photos on the Internet. Let bake for 24 hours over all channels of communication, and the end result is a furor over whether 15-year-old Miley Cyrus, Disney Channel darling, was manipulated by photographer Annie Leibovitz, or if it was just another beautiful photograph.

The photo, for those who have not seen it, features Cyrus wrapped in a bed sheet, her back naked, but chest completely covered, looking back at the camera. Pushing the envelope a little, perhaps, but Cyrus said herself in the interview accompanying the photo that she was completely comfortable with it and "[It] looks pretty and really natural... It wasn't in a skanky way."

Since the story broke, Cyrus has issued an apology to her fans, saying that she was embarrassed by the shoot, which she thought was supposed to be 'artistic.' Leibovitz has also



SCOTT MITCHELL / VALLEY STAR

issued her own statement, saying she was sorry that the photo was misinterpreted, and she did not pressure Cyrus into the pose.

The photo in question wasn't so racy and shocking that it warrants burning Hannah Montana merchandise in the street, as marriage and parenting blogger Lin Burrell suggested. Nor is it the worst photo of Cyrus out there. A quick Internet search will turn up Cyrus pulling down her shirt to flash her bra, posing provocatively in a bikini, or draped over her supposed boyfriend. Cyrus has admitted she posted these on her own Myspace. Why not make a fuss over those photos, instead of a shoot where, according to Vanity Fair, her minders or parents were present all day, and all had a chance to see the photos and approve them.

To be honest, it wasn't the bed sheet photo that worried me — it was those between Miley and her father, Billy Ray that had me concerned. I'm no prude, but seeing Billy Ray with his hands on her thighs and her draped over him made my 'ick' reflex kick in.

Lets not forget that young starlets, such as Cyrus, are often seen on the red carpet or on stage wearing much less than a bulky bed sheet. How is being wrapped in a sheet any different to wearing a strapless dress, or something with a low back?

All of the parents out there who are concerned that Miley's latest escapade will make your child want to get topless too, relax a little. At least she is sticking to classy shoots in Vanity Fair instead of getting out of a car in Hollywood and showing us all how she forgot her panties. If I had to pick between the two, I know who I would rather my kid take after.

OPINION

CANDIDATE CRUSH

Dear Hillary

BY WILL REYES
EDITOR AT LARGE

As we enter the fifth arduous month of the race for the 2008 Democratic nomination, it frequently seems like one big circus, complete with ridiculous theatrics and a clear-cut ringmaster. Ladies and gentlemen, Washington proudly presents — in all her hypocritical glory — senator extraordinaire Hillary Clinton.

She is one of America's great contradictions. A prototypical member of the political elite — masters of doublespeak that are always winking and never met a situation they didn't think they were perfect for.

If asked to find an example more fitting than Clinton, Sherlock Holmes himself would shudder. Witness a woman who, with her husband, made \$109 million in the last eight years, yet claims to epitomize and relate to the struggle of middle-class America. A woman who says she despises free trade agreements like the North American Free Trade Agreement, now that she wants working-class votes, yet participated in meetings securing its passage during her time as first lady and later repeatedly praised it.

"People don't need a president who looks down on them," Clinton recently said. "They need a president who stands up for them. And that is exactly what I will do."

Shipping millions of U.S. jobs overseas was apparently her idea of lifting people up. Her unique approach to standing up for

Americans doesn't stop there.

She recently denounced a free trade deal with Colombia, yet her husband was paid \$800,000 to give speeches supporting it. If that wasn't enough, her campaign's top political strategist was hired by Colombia to lobby Congress for its passage. For all her touted experience, she seemingly never learned that blatant conflicts of interest might raise a few red flags.

One of her most notable two-faced moments involves her saying she's against special interests and will end the run of the "wealthy and well-connected." It sounds noble, but is empty rhetoric since her campaign has taken more lobbyist money than any other candidate. Her other problem is that she's a gold star member of the wealthy and well connected. She would be hard-pressed to follow through with that promise unless she plans on committing political suicide, which thanks to the unforgiving grasp of irony, she most likely already has.

Clinton represents everything that's wrong with politics. Candidates like her are the reason widespread voter apathy leaves millions distrustful of the government. People are tired of politicians who say one thing and do another, who don't apologize for their lies and mistakes, but prefer to deflect blame or change the subject altogether.

In years past, her battle-tested political strategy would have worked like a charm. This is the time reserved every four years for each party to attack the other with the old bag of Washington tricks until only one person is left standing, the dust settles and it's back to business as usual. When it comes to playing that dirty game, few are as adept



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Dear John

BY SHANNON MCHUGH
STAFF WRITER

As residents of Southern California, we know that several types of people are hardly ever seen: people who oppose plastic surgery, people who do not exude orange-hued tan lines, and conservatives; I happen to embody all of these qualities, making me a seemingly endangered species about to be extinct in this state.

The presidential election of 2008 is in full swing, and with no prominent Democratic candidate, it seems as if the whole country is in a political frenzy surrounding immature statements made by both Senators Barack Obama (Ill.) and Hillary Clinton (N.Y.), all of which have no correlation with the policies that are important when choosing

a candidate. The issue that seems to be hiding, in a country that has more red states than blue, is that we have certainly chosen the wrong candidate for the Republican Party.

With Obama talking about how Pennsylvanians are gun-toting, ultra-religious hicks and Clinton lying about her trip to Bosnia, claiming she was under "sniper fire," it seems everyone has forgotten that we have elected a liberal hiding in a conservative mask to run the right side of this campaign.

Like the wolf impersonating Little Red Riding Hood's grandmother, Sen. John McCain (Ariz.) has put on the façade of a conservative candidate. All the while, he explains that if he is elected president, he will open our nation's borders, get rid of tax cuts, and is adamant about promoting human experimentation, which are quali-

ties that only the Democratic Party would consider their own, and are detestable to any conservative.

Sure, he is a strong supporter of our troops in Iraq, but that one part of his campaign cannot save him from the scorn of those in his party who are questioning every other decision he has made. Threatening to shut down Guantanamo and being altogether unsure about his own personal view on abortion is not something that the conservatives are looking for. We all thought Mitt Romney was a flip-flopper, but McCain certainly took Romney's place and ran with it.

There has to be someone else who can stand up for the beliefs of the Republican Party better than this man. He refuses to see that he is more of a Democrat than Hilary Clinton seems to be. He even considered running on a ticket with John Kerry in the 2004 election, and if that does not scream left wing, I do not know what does.

It seems that we have three Democrats running for president, and there's not a thing that Republicans can do about it. It has now become a battle for the lesser of three evils, and in any case, McCain is certainly not it.

As an endangered species in California, I have enough problems trying to prove that I don't need to wear oversized sunglasses and say "like" every other word of my sentences, but now I have to deal with being completely unsatisfied with my choices for president in the first year I am eligible to vote. We have nearly 7 months for someone to prove me wrong, and give us the ability to make an educated and life-changing decision for Americans. I am hoping someone will give me a reason to do so. Until then, I will sit back and watch the madness of the Democratic Party and wonder why McCain isn't joining in on the bickering.

Dear Barack

BY JAMES BENNETT
OPINION EDITOR

"I cannot, with candor, tell you that all is well with the world. [...] The rush of modern civilization itself has raised for us new difficulties, new problems which must be solved if we are to preserve to the United States the political and economic freedom for which Washington and Jefferson planned and fought," Franklin D. Roosevelt said before the 1936 Democratic National Convention.

Illinois Sen. Barack Obama

stands tall as the poster boy for all things good, just, noble and true. He fought for the tired, the poor, the huddled masses. He's a six-foot tall silver lining wrapped in a million dollar blazer with a million dollar smile; but within every silver lining, there lurks an ominous dark cloud, jam packed full of closet skeletons and acid rain.

In 1995, Obama embarked on his big-time public career when he ran for the Illinois State Senate representing the 13th District. The race appeared to be in the bag before it began with incumbent Alice Palmer not participating. However, as the race began,

she reappeared to run against the fledgling Obama, along with three other candidates. Unfortunately for them, he rustled up enough legal formalities to disqualify Palmer and all other opponents involved in the Senate race, leaving him the last man standing, winning unopposed.

Obama supporters constantly bash Sen. Hillary Clinton (D-NY) for employing "typical dirty Washington politics." Perhaps they should reconsider that point of contention, seeing as how their golden boy's got a bit of tarnish on his political brass.

Here's a little FYI for Obama

supporters. David Axelrod, while not a household name, is a pretty big deal in Washington. He's a political consultant, and he works on Obama's campaign. He has been credited with pioneering Obama's famed e-money gravy train. Axelrod's been around the block a few times; he's even worked for some questionable cats in his day. Among his clientele is a certain someone of significance, perhaps Elliot Spitzer rings a bell? Spitzer, in case you don't remember, was the guy who worked tirelessly to smother, among other things, prostitution rings while simultaneously

being quite deeply involved with a high-end prostitute himself.

Talk about saying one thing and doing another. Obama's campaign is based solely on rhetoric; but can that rhetoric be trusted while he employs a man who's morally questionable?

"The government invented the AIDS virus as a means of genocide." "The government infected black men with syphilis in the Tuskegee Experiment." Words of a crazy vagrant sitting outside 7-11? No, those are quotes straight from the lips of Rev. Jeremiah Wright, also known as Obama's ex-pastor.

Obama quickly denounced his old friend after these quotes became public; but that's not really adequate. I could be best friends with Jeffrey Dahmer, but as soon as he started raping corpses and eating people, nobody would question my sanity just because we were friends BEFORE he went crazy, right? Wrong.

Don't believe everything you read. Obama has a disproportionate amount of scandal under his belt for the time he's been in the public light. The other candidates aren't saints, Obama's not a saint, and all of them are sinners.

Rebate Robber

ASTRID SEIPELT
NEWS EDITOR

Starting this week, approximately 130 million families and singles in the United States will receive a check in the mail from the Internal Revenue Service, an effort the Bush Administration hopes will stimulate the slowing economy by everyone promptly spending the cash as soon as they get their hands on it.

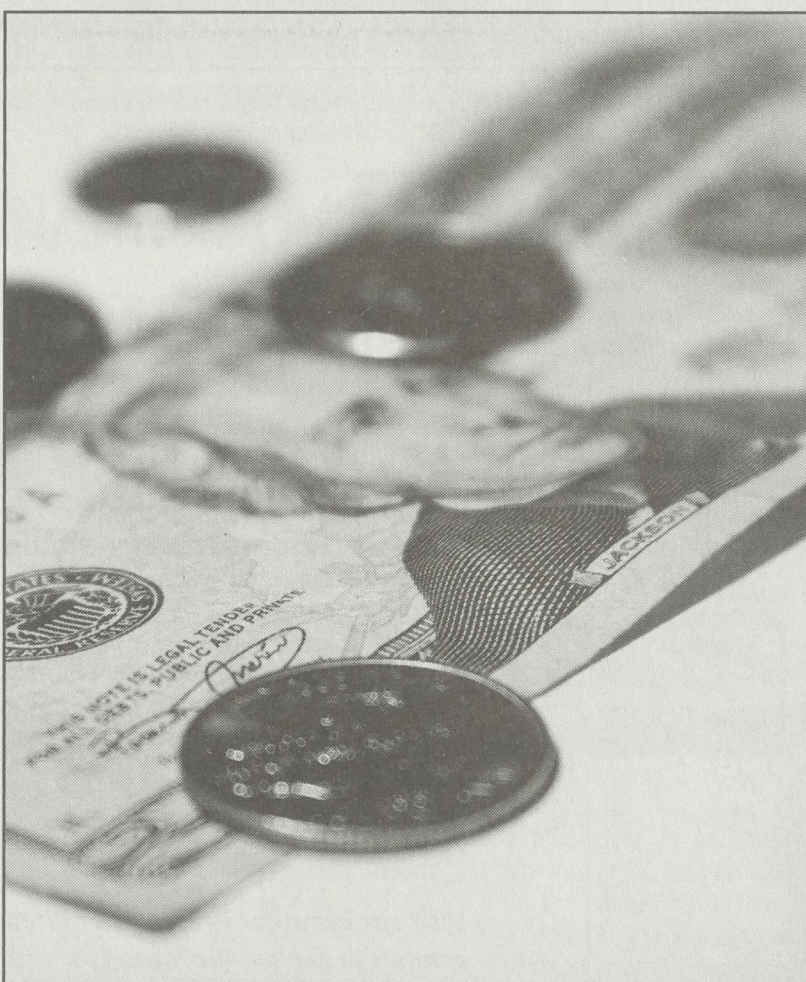
As soon as I heard about the rebate in February this year, I thought it had perfect timing. I would be moving into a new apartment in June with my boyfriend and that \$600 would go a long way toward making our house a home. Or maybe I could put it toward my summer vacation back to Australia. My roommates made plans to put the rebate toward their credit cards and car payments. All in all, we agreed, the rebate was a fine idea.

As soon as I was ready, I filed my taxes so I could be considered for the rebate. As a foreign citizen here on a student visa, and therefore a non-resident, I swallowed the fact that I would not get a hefty tax return and

the IRS would keep a good portion of what I gave them.

As I eagerly waited for the letter in the mail outlining the details of the rebate, I was handed a rude realization. Even though I work, pay taxes and do my darndest to help out the U.S. economy every time I step into a mall, I will not have any part in the rebate. Apparently, just because I'm not a resident means I don't deserve any funds from Bush's bank account. Needless to say, I'm pretty sour.

I'm sure I'm not the only person who deserves the rebate but is missing out. In fact, a friend of mine is also being overlooked because she is still claimed as a dependent by her parents. But what annoys me the most is that I could have gone the shady route and lied on my tax return. I could have posed as a resident and reaped the benefits like everyone else. But I didn't, so now I feel like I'm being punished. I'm sure there is reasoning behind certain groups of people not qualifying for the rebate, because the government can't just go throw-



JONATHAN GIBBY, ASSISTANT PHOTO EDITOR / VALLEY STAR

ing cash everywhere. But I've followed all the rules, so why can't the IRS give me something in return?

So when my roommates and friends receive their checks in the mail in the coming months and pump it back into the economy just

like Bush wants, I will watch them wistfully and wish I could join in. Maybe next time a rebate is handed out, the administration and the IRS will give it to everyone who pays their taxes and is part of the economy, and not exclude people like me.

Important Lessons Lost

SHEILA KOOCHAK
STAFF WRITER

The more I go through life, the more I realize that so many people are clueless and extremely gullible. There are certain things that are common sense, but there are life lessons that one must know and there should be more classes dedicated to helping students prepare and cope with the real world once they graduate.

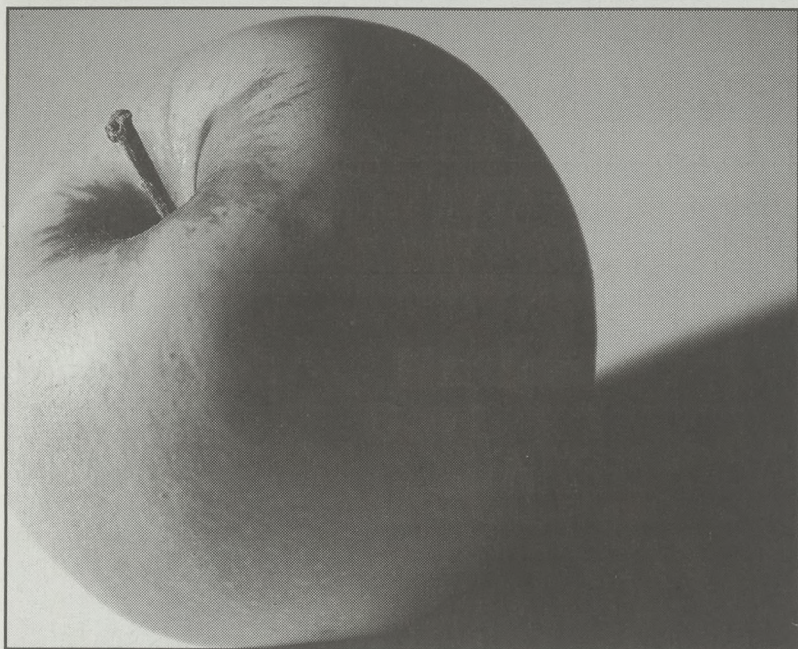
High school is mostly about memorizing information to recite back, only to erase the information you walk out after taking the test. Continuing on to college, you do a bit of the same things, but you also learn to expand your mind; even people who graduate from college will learn lessons from the real world the hard way. All of this could've been prevented with some proper education beforehand.

The most important lesson that should be taught is how to manage personal finances. Most young adults have no clue about how to invest their money and, as a result, stupidly waste it. Many young adults don't even check up on their credit score to make sure everything is on target. So many have credit cards with an astronomically high interest rate, and go around thinking that paying the minimum balance is worth it, but in the long run, end up paying 2 to 3 times more.

An issue that should be taught growing up is communicating effectively, and I don't mean giving a formal business speech. I'm talking about being able to take what's in that colossal brain and explain it to someone else clearly enough for them to understand it the first time around. Successful relationships (work and personal) require solid communication: the use of body language, appropriate tone of voice and eye contact. Students need to learn to be gracious and understanding of alternative viewpoints while opening their ears and listening.

Given the fact that relationships play a tremendous role in our lives, it's surprising how little parents teach their children about them. We should learn the basics of relationships and how to evaluate them. The ability to select a suitable partner will greatly affect your life in every way. Choose someone who you enjoy being with and someone beyond the physical connection because good looks and youth are temporary.

When you're young, most don't have any major obligations, but as you get older, the pain and problems start piling on. Life is all about exploring and certain lessons can only be learned through experience, but there are certain aspects that need to be touched on in school. So the key is to be taught early in life so when reality hits you, you can charge right back at it full force.



JONATHAN GIBBY, ASSISTANT PHOTO EDITOR / VALLEY STAR

APPLE FOR TEACHER - Hosted by Tau Alpha Epsilon and the Associated Union, the 2008 Apple Awards honored professors on campus that have made a difference in their students' lives.

Professors Prove to be Apple of Student's Eyes

By JAMES BENNETT
OPINION EDITOR

"It was, probably, without hyperbole, one of the best days of my life," said journalism professor Bill Dauber, as the sunshine glinted through the crystalline apples at the 2008 Apple Awards. Students across campus voted throughout April for professors who made a difference in their lives. The three most voted-for professors received the illustrious Crystal Apple.

Hosted by the ASU and Tau Alpha Epsilon, April 30, the ceremony featured student and faculty speeches, an invocation by Tyree Wieder and an interpretive dance.

"All of us can tell the story about a teacher who made a difference in our life," Wieder said. "This day is one of the small, small ways in which we can recognize faculty, [...] that they really make all the difference in the world."

Don Gauthier, president of the

Academic Senate elaborated on the administration's thanks to Valley's distinguished professors, illustrating the circle of teaching: "every single one of us [the faculty] wouldn't be here if we weren't inspired by someone."

Weider said that what happens in the classroom is of capital importance, campus and commutes pale in comparison.

Student testimony reaffirmed that when journalism student Will Reyes, in his introduction speech for Dauber said, "Professor Dauber believed in me when I didn't, and encouraged me to do better." He continued, "Through his teaching I finally realized I can do anything I put my mind to."

Winning the Crystal Apple took Macro Biology professor Lawrence T. Nakamura by surprise, who was certain he did not fit the description of an Apple Award winner.

"I thought it was a joke at first."

see Awards page 7

Stimulus Payment Lines Student Pockets

By SHANNON MCHUGH
STAFF WRITER

Nearly 130 million American taxpayers are receiving tax rebates from the Internal Revenue Service as part of an economic stimulus rebate program to help boost consumer spending, and eventually the nation's economy.

Those who filed 2007 tax returns and qualified for the rebate using direct deposit have already begun to find checks in their bank accounts, four days before the scheduled drop date, and the first group of mailed checks is expected to come to taxpayers this week.

"It's obvious our economy is in a slow down," President George W. Bush said April 25. "[And] this money is going to help Americans off-set the high prices we're seeing at the gas pump and the grocery store and will also give our economy a boost to help us pull out of this economic slow down."

Individuals will be receiving up to \$600, whereas married couples who file jointly will be receiving \$1,200 with each child adding up to \$300 more. Valley students who can receive the extra cash seem to vary

in views about what to do with the money. The decision to spend, save, or invest is a tough choice to make, especially with the economic downturn alive in the midst of normal life.

"I'm going to save most of it and spend some of it," said Valley student Octavio Robles. "I will probably use some of it to get a MacBook for school."

The rebate will be given to most taxpayers, yet there are some groups who are excluded from the rebate: people claimed as dependents, or foreign citizens living and working in the United States.

"I am not going to be getting the rebate," said Sarah Knowles, an international student at Valley. "Even if I was able to work, I still wouldn't be getting the money because I am not a citizen."

Though many are confused about what they plan to do with the money, most Valley students' first thoughts are about saving some of the money they will be receiving, which is not exactly what the IRS has in mind for the stimulus checks.

"I don't know what I'm going to do with it yet," said Valley student Hayarpi Sukiasyan. "I'll probably go shopping and save some of it. I don't really think that this will help our

economy out that much, though."

Many students who are getting the rebate are skeptical about the government's intentions with the money, assuming that it will be taxed next year, or that taxpayers will have to eventually pay it back; neither of these assumptions are true, however.

"You will not owe tax on your payment when you file your 2008 federal income tax return," the IRS explained on their official website. "But you should keep a copy of the IRS letter you receive later this year listing the amount of your payment."

• **Almost 7.7 million people will receive their rebate in the first week of payments.**

• **People with social security number ending in 00 to 25 will receive their rebate during May.**

• **People with social security numbers ending in 26 to 75 will receive the rebate in June.**

• **People with social security numbers ending in 76 to 99 will receive the rebate in July.**

Grand Theft Camera, Laptop, Not Auto

By SHEILA KOOCHAK
STAFF WRITER

The video game Grand Theft Auto was released this week, but criminals on campus decided to go on real life heist, stealing more than just electronics.

A black Louis Vuitton wallet was stolen on April 28 between 12 p.m. and 2:30 p.m. The purse was left in room 109 in the English building with the door unlocked. Upon returning to the office, the wallet with credit cards and cash was missing. No further information was available.

A student arrived at Business Journalism, room 114 at 8:45 a.m. on April 28 and left their purse on floor next to a desk. The student left for lunch at 11 a.m. and returned back to lab afterwards. Upon arriving at home at 5 p.m., the student noticed their digital camera and cash missing from their purse. A search of the area was conducted but nothing was recovered.

In Humanities room 108B on April 28, between 9:30 a.m. and 12:15 p.m., a laptop belonging to the school was stolen. The laptop was left in the office

with the door unlocked when it stolen. An attempt to locate the serial number in order to track down the laptop was unsuccessful.

A Play Station Portable was stolen out of the Lion's Den between 10:30 a.m. and 7:00 p.m. on April 28. The student entered the Lion's Den and placed books on the floor next to the television, then leaving outside to play cards with friends. Upon returning, the student noticed their PSP was missing. They immediately contacted the campus Sheriff's Department.

This Week in History

VALLEY STAR May 8, 1969

Follow the Money - A Star editorial probed the use of Associated Student Union funds, saying that much of their spending is non-essential and would be better spent on college programs that truly need it. The Star encouraged the

ASU to take into consideration the merits, or lack thereof, of the programs they fund when drawing up the new fiscal year's budget.

Valley Swimmers Sink, Blame it on Bad Luck - The college swim team were hexed out of winning its first state swimming and diving championship, after a series of judging errors and injuries to the team. Swim Coach Wiley said "De Anza has one of the finest swimming facilities in the world, and there was no reason for the poor officiating."

Bra's and Poetry Put Frowns on Faces - Censorship was the question of the week in the Valley Forge, written by Sam Hamill. A poem to be distributed in class by an instructor raised the eyebrows of a college administrator, who believed the poem was pornographic in nature. Also discussed was a woman's right to go braless to class, something an instructor felt was too distracting to male students. Hamill called for tight-laced academics to let their hair down and join the modern school times - after all, the 19th century had ended 69 years ago.

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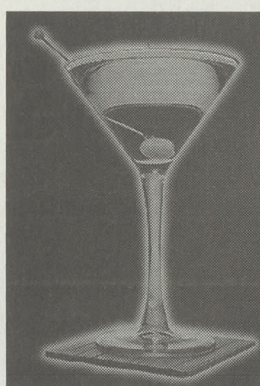
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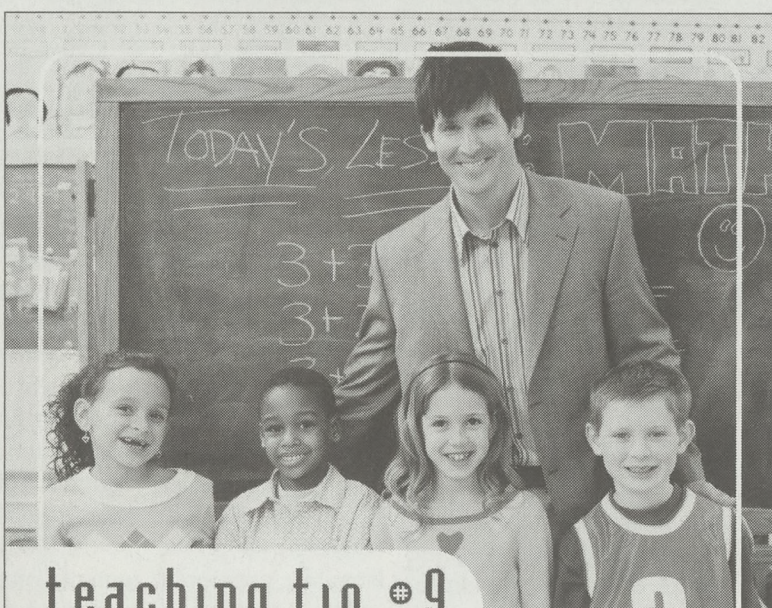
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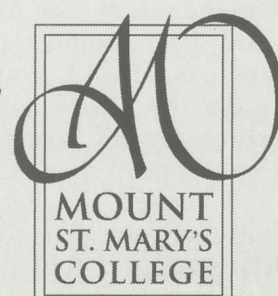
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LAVC
EVENTS

Wednesday, May 7

Photography Exhibition
"Impossible to Forget: The
Nazi Camps Fifty Years
After" – by Michael Kenna
@ 11 a.m. -2 p.m. & 6-
9 p.m. Admission: Free
– Contact: Art Gallery (818)
778-5536 <http://www.lavc.edu/arts/artgallery.html>

Photography Exhibition
"Wounded in America"
– Rotating Exhibit @ 11
a.m. -2 p.m. & 6-9 p.m. (Art
Building Hallway Exhibit
Cases); Admission: Free
– Contact: Dennis Reed
(818) 947-2625

Thursday, May 8

Photography Exhibition
"Impossible to Forget: The
Nazi Camps Fifty Years
After" – by Michael Kenna
@ 11 a.m. -2 p.m. & 6-9
p.m. (LAVC Art Gallery);
Admission: Free – Contact:
Art Gallery (818) 778-5536
<http://www.lavc.edu/arts/artgallery.html>

Photography Exhibition
"Wounded in America"
– Rotating Exhibit @ 11
a.m. -2 p.m. & 6-9 p.m. (Art
Building Hallway Exhibit
Cases); Admission: Free
– Contact: Dennis Reed
(818) 947-2625

Valley College Players pres-
ents Bullshot Crummond @
8 p.m. (Horseshoe Theater)
– Contact: Theater Arts
(818) 947-2790

Friday, May 9

LAVC Guitar Ensemble
Concert @ 8 p.m. (Music
106); Admission: \$10 –
Contact: Music Dept (818)
947-2347

LAVC Dance Program
"Emotion in Motion" Dance
Concert @ 6 p.m. & 8:30
p.m. (Dance Studio, North
Gymnasium); Admission:
\$10 general admission,
\$8 students – Contact:
Geordie Wright (818) 947-
2908

Saturday, May 10

LAVC Dance Program
"Emotion in Motion" Dance
Concert @ 6 p.m. & 8:30
p.m. (Dance Studio, North
Gymnasium); Admission:
\$10 general admission,
\$8 students – Contact:
Geordie Wright (818) 947-
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mation, qualifications and applica-
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947-2646. All events held in the
Career/Transfer Center
All events held in Career/Transfer
Center unless otherwise indicat-
ed. Call (818) 947-2646 for further
information.

Wednesday, May 7

Trinity Christian College Rep. 5-
7p.m. Monarch Square
Undecided major/career workshop
1-2 p.m.

Thursday, May 8

Speakers on Careers in Teaching
Elementary and Secondary
School 1-2pm FL102
UC Santa Barbara Rep 10-1 p.m.
CSU Dominguez Hills Rep 10-1
p.m.



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Valley Travel

Life on Display at The Americana

ELIZEDA BELTRAN
STAFF WRITER

While many people seek ref-
uge from the relentless traffic
and noisy streets that character-
ize Los Angeles, others like to
frolic in the clattering city and
rub shoulder to shoulder, and
if you are one of these people,
Glendale has a treat for you.

The Americana at Brand,
an outdoor mall and residential
complex that opened May 2,
proved itself a shopper's utopia
where thousands of eager
consumers meandered through
the 15.5-acre design that
offers more than just shops.

The entrance to the retail
Disneyland almost made me
believe I was in New York City,
with policemen directing the flow
of people and cars. My first stop
was at H&M, a retail store with
cheap prices, where I had to say
"excuse me" and "sorry" more
than ten times as I made my
way through the isles of clothes
to the beat of Fergie's "Clumsy."

"Everything is going amaz-
ing, we had over 300 people in
line at 7 a.m.," exclaimed Narine
Gazanchian, H & M store
manager, as she juggled ques-
tions and calls. "I think we're
going to be busy all this day
and throughout the weekend."

The buzzing sounds outside
the store called me and soon
I found myself at the epicen-
ter of the place. I was greeted
by a figure-eight-shaped foun-
tain giving a water show to



PAUL OLDEN, PHOTO EDITOR/ VALLEY STAR

SHOPPING OASIS IN GLENDALE - 5 year old Tigran Pogosyan of North Hollywood, enjoys the dancing water display at the new Americana at Brand shopping mall in Glendale. The \$400 million dollar project opened to large crowds May 2.

the delight of watchers while
"What a Wonderful World"
emanated from the speakers.

The fountain is surrounded by
grassy areas and enough chairs
to accommodate observers. The
mall offers more than 70 shops
from the low end of the price spec-
trum, like Urban Outfitters and
H&M to Barney's New York and
an upcoming Tiffany & Co. store.

"I have been waiting for this
ever since they announced it"
said Jacquelyn Chang as she
searched through the racks of
clothes at Urban Outfitters.

And when you get hungry,
because you will, there are close
to 20 places where you can eat;
from Pinkberry to calm your
sugar urges to a more formal
lunch at The Cheesecake Factory.

You can also hop on a trolley
for a tour of the outdoor mall and
admire the many architectural
styles that make up the \$400-
million project. From a Rite
Aid that looks more like a bou-
tique to a suspended chandelier
adorning the walkway, Art Deco
styles clash against Classical
and Mediterranean designs, giv-

ing the place a magical quality.

Even the parking structure
is spectacular. Reminiscent of
the Eiffel Tower, the eight-story
building comes equipped with
balcony views, elevator operators
– mine had an English accent
– and an impressive descending
view of a decadent chandelier
hanging from the lobby, accom-
panied by the sounds of a piano.

The only drawback is the price
of parking. The first hour is free,
the second one \$3, or free with
a validation, and then the price
increases by \$2 with a cap at \$9.

But a simple solution is to park at
the Glendale Galleria and walk
the block that separates the two.

More than shops, the
Americana offers an atmosphere,
a glamorous lifestyle that is syn-
onymous with Los Angeles. And
if you can't afford to rent or
live in the apartments at The
Americana, that range from
\$2,000 to \$5,000 to rent and
\$700,000 to \$2 million to own,
you can at least partake in that
lifestyle from 10 a.m. to 9 p.m.
Monday through Saturday and
11 a.m. to 7 p.m. on Sundays.



SCOTT MITCHELL/ VALLEY STAR

CLASSICAL STRINGS-Beth Elliot and the Kadima String Quartet performed classical music before a full house as part of the LAVC Spring 2008 Concert Series on April 30.

Kadima Strings Fill the Halls with Music

SCOTT MITCHELL
SPECIAL TO THE STAR

Mother Nature provided concert-
goers with comfortable weather for the
body and the Kadima String Quartet pro-
vided soothing sounds for the soul April
30 as part of the Music Department's
Spring 2008 Free Concert Series.

The Kadima musicians have been
performing and creating ties with
Valley College for more than ten
years. The talented band of musicians
has been interfacing with the music,
teaching and performing on campus.

"I love this, this is my life!" said
violinist Beth Elliot. "There are
two things that you do with music...
You play and you pass it on!"

A mixed audience of students,
seniors, faculty and community
members filled the hall and took in
an hour's worth of German classi-
cal music. They played assorted pic-
ces by Haydn, Beethoven, Schubert,
Brahms and Hindemich. The string
quartet is known for its ability to
present the audience with classi-
cal music in a way that makes the
music interesting and accessible.

Joining Elliot on stage were Lynn
Angebrannt on cello, and Alexander
Kalman and Yi-Huan Zhao on violin.

Education and performing are common
themes to all of the Kadima musicians.
In addition to being highly talented
musicians, the group's members are
active instructors who share a passion
for teaching as well as performing.

Recently, the Kadima String
Quartet earned residence status on
campus. As a result of this honor,
the group has become an official and
integral part of the music department.

"We teach three levels of symphony
orchestra," Elliot said. "Students per-
form with us and play on a regular
basis. Students participate in five con-
certs a year, showcasing music that
they learned during the semester."

The LAVC Guitar Ensemble will
perform May 9 at 8 p.m. in Music
Recital Hall M106. Kate Lewis is the
director and admission is \$10. May
11 at 7 p.m., the Valley Symphony
Orchestra will perform at the Gindi
Auditorium, 15600 Mulholland Drive,
Los Angeles. Admission is \$15-25.
May 14 at 1 p.m., there is a free
concert in Music Recital Hall M106,
featuring Judy Huang on piano.

To learn more about the Spring
2008 Concert Series contact the
Music Department at (818) 947-
2347 or email: concerts@lavc.edu.

Grand Theft Auto Wreaks Havoc

BRAD TAYLOR
MANAGING EDITOR

Millions of testosterone-filled video game
fans spent most of the week killing hook-
ers and crashing cars; yes "Grand Theft
Auto IV" has arrived and offers next-gen-
eration graphics with old-world bloodlust.

GTA IV offers gamers the top-notch story
of Niko Bellic, a Serbian war veteran who
arrives in fictional Liberty City in search of the
American Dream. Niko's journey is what sepa-
rates this game from all previous GTA titles—his
struggles to understand America and his search
for a new life underscore the rampant violence.

Although Rockstar Games has taken
great care in fleshing out a story that is
equal parts "Sopranos" as it is "Fast and the
Furious," the company's creative team kept
everything fans loved from the series and
amped them up to fit the new Playstation
3 and Xbox 360 graphic capabilities.

Liberty City herself is a living breath-
ing character; its streets have a lived-in feel
and her citizens offer more to say than just
a few generic phrases. A player can spend
hours just driving around the city, explor-
ing the back alleys and taking various
women on dates to go bowling or play pool.

Every great game needs a great soundtrack
and GTA IV boasts 200-plus songs in its
arsenal. Liberty City offers listeners 18 radio
stations, from hip hop "The Beat 102.7" to
"Vladivostok FM" playing the latest Eastern
European music that brings players the most
eclectic collection of tunes in any game.

What players really want out of GTA is the
violence and this game presses the boundar-
ies of taste and graphics with so much over-
the-top killing that players may begin to feel
bad about mowing down dozens of police
officers with a rocket launcher. This is where
Niko's story becomes the saving grace of the
game; the character has a heart and his inner
conflict about killing mob bosses and street
thugs are what bring players back to reality.

That is not to say parental groups will be
giving the game a big hug, but it does offer a
level of sophistication not seen in most games
of any genre.

GTA IV is to video games what "Indiana
Jones and the Crystal Skull" is to cinema – a
summer escape that blends the best parts of
the franchise to give fans what they want,
while offering new gamers a chance to jump
on board, steal a car and discover a violent
world where anything goes.



"Iron Man" Breaks the Superhero Mold

JOSH SPENCE
VALLEY LIFE EDITOR

Jon Favreau's "Iron Man" is an emphatic
departure from most standard superhero mo-
vies. Not only is it a film that is fully satisfy-
ing to fans, both casual and hardcore, but one
that, 45 years after the comic book's incep-
tion, is still politically and socially relevant.

Robert Downey Jr. plays billionaire weapons
industrialist Tony Stark, a genius inventor/play-
boy who makes a dramatic lifestyle change after
spending three months in captivity in Afghanistan.
When he discovers that his own company, Stark
Industries, supplied the weapons used to sup-
port terrorism, Stark adopts the persona of Iron
Man to undo the damage his company has done.

While most actors lack the depth, charac-
ter and emotion needed to carry the lead in
a superhero film, Downey Jr. effortlessly tog-
gles between superhero, genius inventor, trou-
bled existentialist and lovable jerk. The emo-
tional struggle that Stark endures in pursu-
ing what will redefine his life, is what makes

you root for him and Iron Man, compared to
just waiting for random explosions for two
hours. Whatever trivial Hollywood concerns
there were about Downey Jr.'s ability to carry a
big-budget film should be allayed immediately.

With Downey Jr.'s considerable acting chops
on display throughout the film, the support-
ing cast should be credited for breathing new
life into conventional comic book characters.

Gwyneth Paltrow plays Pepper Potts, Stark's
budding love interest/secretary. Smart and sneaky
hot, Paltrow does her paper counterpart justice
while Terence Howard as Lt. Colonel James
Rhodes plays perfect counterpoint to Stark's
newfound ebullience. Jeff Bridges' menacing
performance as Obadiah Stane, Stark's former
business partner and friend, is not only essential
to make this film interesting, but is Bridges
best performance since "The Big Lebowski."



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OPINION

Bryant is Not Basketball's Most Valuable

By ERIC L. PATTEN
SPORTS EDITOR

A chant echoed from the 200-section in the upper bowels of Oakland's Oracle Arena on March 24. The words were all-too familiar, but directed towards a player not named Stephen Jackson or Baron Davis.

"M-V-P. M-V-P," the small contingent of fans yelled.

The chant started to swell into a tiny wave of voices and with under a minute to go in the Warriors 123-119 overtime loss to the Lakers, something became apparent.

Kobe Bryant was probably going to win the NBA's Most Valuable Player award, but he shouldn't.

As the Lakers leap-frogged New Orleans in the final week of the season to secure the top seed in the Western Conference playoffs, Bryant was destined to win the award that has so eluded him for 12 years.

Hornets young star Chris Paul, on the other hand, appeared likely to mimic his team—second best.

However, much like the selection of elected officials, voters can be wrong.

Why should the league's most selfish player be awarded for simply becoming less selfish?

Bryant took 2.2 less shots per game this season compared to last. He scored 28.3 points per game, 26-percent of his team's total scoring, marking the first time since '05-06 that Bryant did not lead the league in this category ('07-08 leader: LeBron James at 31-percent), according to 82games.com.

Still, Bryant's Lakers did not catapult themselves into the West's elite, until they acquired Pau Gasol in exchange for a flaming pile of Kwame Brown and two invisible contracts named Aaron McKie and Marc Gasol. Of course, Javaris Crittenton was included as well.

In fact, according to ESPN, the Lakers were on pace to win 54 games with Bryant manning the controls as the team's only all-star. They finished with 57 wins, which appears miniscule, but in the West it would have meant the difference between first and sixth.

Paul's Hornets were as consistent as the Lakers, with far less talent, and Paul made everyone better. Peja Stojakovic, who for once was not beset by injuries, once again became one of the NBA's best outside threats. David West became one of the best player's you've never heard of. And Head Coach Byron Scott, with Paul acting as an extension

Why should the league's most selfish player be rewarded for simply becoming less selfish?

of him on the floor, looked once again like he could coach.

While Bryant finished second in the league in scoring, Paul was better in almost every category.

Hoops Addict.com says that Paul is the first player since Tim Hardaway in '92-93 to average 20-plus points per game and 10-plus assists per game in the same season. Paul also led the league in steals (2.7 per game) and is the first player since Magic Johnson in '86-87 to lead the league in assists and score more than 20 points per game.

But the award is not about numbers, or James would win every year, racking up gaudy numbers on a mediocre team in the East.

The award is also not about rewarding the best player on the best team, otherwise Kevin Gamett would add a second trophy to his mantle.

The Hornets won the league's toughest division because of Paul.

Numbers cannot measure intangibles like floor leadership, and Paul is arguably more important to his team from this standpoint and seven assists. Similar late-season runs helped him win the award that he's never won before. It's just too bad the league's biggest star is not the most valuable.



PAUL OLDEN, PHOTO EDITOR / VALLEY STAR

HOLDING THE HARDWARE - Valley College's Tiffanie Wright displays her medal for a second place finish in the 1-meter dive at the state community college swimming and diving championships at Saddleback College May 1.

Valley Divers Reach Great Heights

■ Wright and Williams Find Success at State Championship

By PAUL OLDEN
PHOTO EDITOR

Valley College divers Tiffanie Wright and Gene Williams' celebratory high-five early in competition at the state swimming and diving championships was a tip off that they knew they were doing well. The championships took play at Saddleback College May 1-3.

Their confidence was born out when Wright, recently named the Western State Conference Female Athlete of the Year in swimming and diving, finished her round of dives in the 1-meter and was awarded 2nd place in a close finish to the winner, Nikki Burrelli of Orange Coast College.

Wright missed first place by four-tenths of a point.

Ann Wright, Valley's diving coach and Tiffanie's mother, said the close finish was stressful. "Tiffanie was a little off in one dive and that all it took for somebody else to pass her."

Wright, who finished 3rd in the 3-meter diving competition the next day, says she is pleased with her breakout season.

"I did improve and I feel a lot more consistent this year," she said.

Wright gives her mother much of the credit for her success this season.

"She's been an inspiration for me," she said. "She's tough on me because she wants the best for me."

Gene Williams could be described as the definition of tough.

Williams has competed through shoulder and triceps injuries this season, but his persistence paid off with a 3rd place finish 3-meter dive.

"I'm really pleased because coming into the competition, I kind of tweaked it [the left triceps injury]. . . ." Williams said. "So my concentration was mainly on trying to stay consistent. I'm happy."

Wright was pleased and surprised by William's



PAUL OLDEN, PHOTO EDITOR / VALLEY STAR

HIGH FIVES ALL AROUND - Valley College divers Gene Williams and Tiffanie Wright congratulate each other after the first day of the 2008 California Community College Diving Championships at Saddleback College.

first day result. "He finished way higher than we expected ... which is great," she said.

Williams also praised Wright's guidance for his improvement this season.

"Ann is an excellent coach," he said. "She gave me quite a few key tips that really helped me improve my diving."

It was an upbeat finish to what has been, overall, a down season for the Valley College swim team, which didn't send any swimmers to the state competition.

Visit www.lavalleystar.com to see video of Wright and Williams' dives from the event.

Track Takes the Tape at First Prelim

By JAMES BENNETT
OPINION EDITOR

Valley's track and field team plowed through the tape at the first state preliminary at Bakersfield College last Saturday. Several of our men and women advanced to the next round, leaving the rest of the Western State Conference in the dust.

Men Andrew Salg and Savoy Rhyne advanced in the 5k and triple jump events, respectively, while women Sylvia Alboniga qualified in the 100 and 400-meter hurdles and Mekka Edwards-White for the 100-meter dash.

Both Valley's men's and women's teams did well this season, with the men taking seventh in the conference and the women landing in fifth.

The Western State Conference boasts some of the state's top competitors.

"The caliber of the western state conference, well, it's pretty rough," said track and field Head Coach Francois Wolman. "In distance running alone, the top three guys in the 5k and 10k are the top in the state, so to make it out of our conference... it's... pfft."

Valley's got a good shot at taking state in a few events.

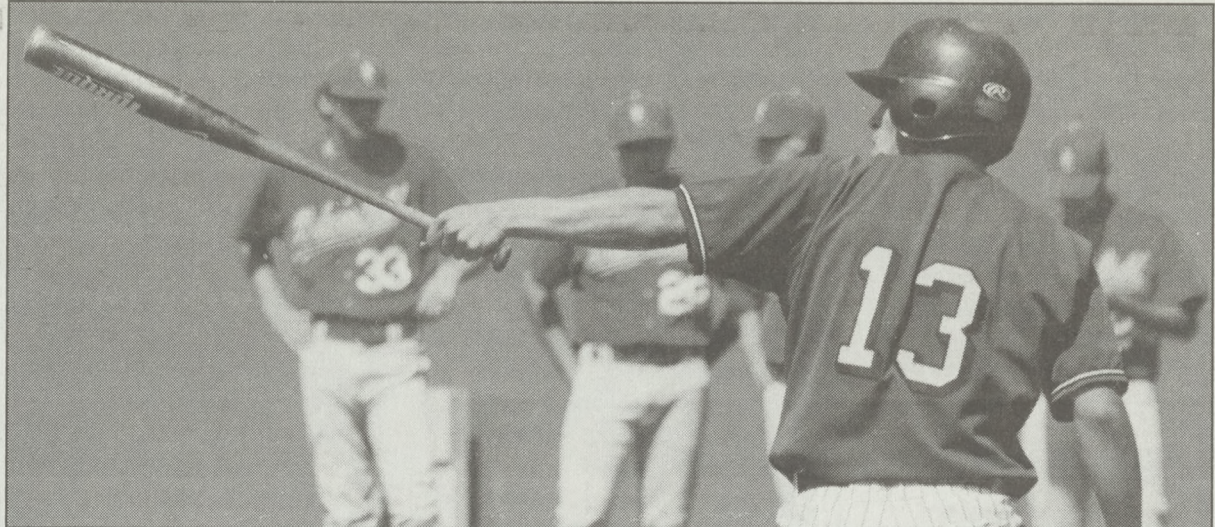
Salg is predicted to perform well, having won the conference in the 5k and taking second in the 10k.

For the women, Edwards-White is favored to smoke the competition in the 800 meters, sporting an impressive time of 2:14 flat.

"The way she runs, I don't see anybody beating her. She's very talented and dedicated," commented Wolman.

The events last Saturday marked the end of the regular season and the beginning of the state contest.

In order to compete at the state level, athletes must succeed at two rounds of preliminaries. The second round being held, once again, at Bakersfield College next Saturday. Following that, the state contest will take place at Cerritos College in the proceeding week.



PAUL OLDEN, PHOTO EDITOR / VALLEY STAR

POINTING TO THE FUTURE - Because for Angel Nunez (13) and his teammates, there is no present. Valley's season ended May 1 with a win at Bakersfield 5-3. A home loss to the Renegades April 29 ended the Monarchs playoffs hope

Baseball's Final Victory Not Enough

Team Misses Playoffs After 24-20 Season

By PAUL OLDEN
PHOTO EDITOR

The timing was all wrong for Valley College. They lost 6-3 to Bakersfield May 6 at Pike Field in their final home game of the season.

That was the game they needed to win to boost their playoff hopes.

In what turned out to be hollow consolation for the Monarchs, who finished the regular season by doing something they didn't do enough of in 2008.

They won.

And by beating Bakersfield at Gerry Collis Field, 5-3, Valley College (24-20, 16-12) clinched 3rd place in the Western State Conference South.

But their playoff fate was left to the conference selection committee and the verdict was that their record was not good enough to earn an 'at large' berth.

But at least they can savor their final regular season game.

Sophomore right-hander Drew Vassil was a pitching and hitting hero.

Vassil went 3 for 5 with two RBIs.

And on the mound, in relief of

winning pitcher Martin Sarabia, Vassil pitched 3 1/3 shutout innings with four strikeouts and no walks.

The Monarchs jumped out to a 1-0 first inning lead on losing pitcher Jeremy Gonzales.

Sarabia almost gave his 5-0 lead away in the sixth inning when he allowed three runs, but that's when Vassil came in to shut down the Renegades (28-16, 18-10) the rest of the way.

Gonzales, who walked three and struck out eight Monarch hitters, pitched seven innings, giving up 10 hits and five runs.

Justin Kane, Brandon Ashford and Angel Nunez drove in one run each for the Monarchs.

Looking back on the season as a whole, Head Coach Dave Mallas took note of the up and down nature of his team.

"It's been kind of disappointing as far as results this year are concerned," he said. "I liked our chances [at the start of the season], as far as making it to the playoffs and contending for a conference championship."

The Monarchs final home game, May 6, was a mirror-image of the season.

Things started well for Valley. Starter A.J. Homayun breezed through the first five innings by pitching two-hit, shutout ball,

while striking out five Bakersfield batters.

And Valley put runs on the scoreboard early. Nunez hit a solo homerun to leftfield off Bakersfield starter Kyle Witten. And the Monarchs added two more runs in the third inning when Nunez hit a two-out single to centerfield to drive in runners from second and third.

Little did the Monarchs know that Witten (11-2) would allow only three more hits the entire game.

And in the sixth inning, the Renegades got to Valley's Homayun.

Bakersfield scored twice.

But with two outs and still in front 3-2, the Monarchs looked like they were going to get off the hook with minimal damage.

Wrong.

In quick succession, Bakersfield scored three more runs to take a 5-3 lead.

Mallas said he was caught by surprise by the swift turn of events.

"[Homayun] wasn't fatiguing, he wasn't tired," Mallas said. "He was cruising up to that point."

The regional playoffs begin May 9-10 with round one.

And it's "wait till next year" for Valley.

2008 FALL SPORTS SCHEDULE

FOOTBALL

8.29 (Fri) vs Pasadena 4:00 p.m.
9.6 (Sat) vs Ventura 7:00 p.m.
9.13 (Sat) vs Bakersfield 7:00 p.m.
9.20 (Sat) @ C.O.C. 7:00 p.m.
9.27 (Sat) @ Santa Monica 7:00 p.m.

STARTING
FIVE

CROSS COUNTRY

8.30 (Sat) @ Moorpark 10:00 a.m.
9.5 (Fri) @ Arroyo Verde Park 3:00 p.m.
9.13 (Sat) @ Woodward Park 10:00 a.m.
9.20 (Sat) @ Huntington Bch. 10:00 a.m.
10.3 (Fri) @ Bakersfield 3:00 p.m.

NEWS

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'Alum'

continued from page 1

"Valley has a major part in all of this," he said. "I went back to school at age 23 or 24, and was worried that I wouldn't find the connections needed to succeed, but when I went to Valley and eventually became student body president, I made a lot of friends and found mentors there, like Dr. Tyree Wieder, that I never would have made otherwise."

Valley President Tyree Wieder remembers Orujyan as a very active ASU president who represented his peers well.

"He has been very successful since he has left the college and does keep us posted on his activities," said Wieder in an email. "It is great to see our students come home and remember their time at LAVC."

Orujyan transferred from Valley to UCLA and graduated with a bachelor's degree in political science in 2000, but even before his graduation, he knew that working with young people in the community was what he wanted as his career. While still pursuing his studies at Valley and doing work within the community, the Los Angeles Times wrote a story about him, leading to his career taking off.

"The LA Times wrote a story about me [in May 1999],"

he explained. "That article really opened doors for me and eventually took me to Geneva, where I got an internship with the UN, so I am grateful to Valley for its connections and great ability for student transfers."

Since then, many people have noticed his success in working with youth organizations and have no doubt that he will do well working with the UN.

"I am confident that, with [his] vision, high commitment and wide experience in ICT—for development activities around the world," said Sarbuland Khan, the executive coordinator of ICT and Development, "[he] will be able to make a powerful contribution to the Global Youth Coalition."

Because of his success through the connections that Valley brought to him, Orujyan continues to be an advocate for young students to get involved with any aspect of study they are interested in and to try and find opportunities away from school itself.

"My best advice for young people is to do well in school, but look for opportunities elsewhere," he said. "It's important for you to get engaged and become a part of something you're truly interested in, and to have a great energy and be active with an organization."

shatter the \$4 a gallon mark. But Jim Ritterbusch, president of Ritterbusch & Associates, an energy consultancy in Galena, Ill., said prices could fall to around \$3 a gallon by late summer.

When asked whether this would change his transportation methods, Villasenor said, "I'll continue to ride my bike until that is definite."

'Gas'

continued from page 1

student Tony Villasenor. "It's probably one of the better investments I've made. Although, it is a lot more comfortable to drive."

Although it seems as though there is no foreseeable decline in prices, many some analysts say that gas prices could

'Holocaust'

continued from page 1

he said.

Although he was sent to a labor camp in Poland, he escaped and avoided the gas chambers by passing himself off as a Polish Catholic, first in Warsaw, then in Vienna. Although not many Jews were able to escape from the concentration camps, Neumark explained that once he did get away, living life as a non-Jew was the likeliest way for him to survive; he told the audience that Jews who were able to pass themselves off as non-Jews had a 50 percent survival rate while those who tried to hide in Jewish areas had a three percent rate of survival. Although he succeeded "because of some initiative and daring of [his] own," he explained that he also had "the good fortune of encountering some extraordinarily decent and courageous people," who helped him evade the Nazis and the Gestapo.

Despite the differences in their stories, there were many similarities. Both described their liberation from the Nazis. Bauer was freed from a woman's work camp the Nazis had been moved her to by Russian troops in May 1945. As the prisoners walked out of the gates of the camp and into the forest surrounding it, she remembered, "The birds are singing, the sun is shining and there's silence, deafening silence."

Neumark explained that after Russian troops took control of Vienna, "I was alone, had no home, no homeland, I had no education, no skills, I had no money, but I was alive and I was free and very quickly, I gained my own identity."

Among the approximately 100 people in attendance were many Valley students.

'Diversity'

continued from page 1

"We want to try and increase morale for the students and staff and faculty here at Valley, get everyone together and share what we have in common," he said. "We want to celebrate diversity, but we also want to celebrate what we have in common."

Many of the panel members, led by Jones, commented that communication is the basis for understanding the different communities on campus.

"I think Valley College is a very diverse college," said panelist Syed Hussein, title V director who is in charge of instituting technology in college learning. "but it means nothing if we do not have a dialogue...[all the student clubs on campus], those are the kind of organizations that are bringing people together and opening up that dialogue."

When discussing whether faculty should have to make special accommodations for LGBTQ students on campus, panelist Tracy Bachman, an English instructor, said she thought that gay and lesbian students should be provided for. Bachman cited other college and university campus's that provide 'safe spaces' students can enter if they feel frustrated or silenced and have access to support.

A safe space, used by many colleges and universities across the country, involves students and staff

on campus who are trained to be an ally of LGBTQ students. They place symbols on rooms or offices to indicate that it is a safe space for gay students.

Along with sexuality, transgender issues were raised, with the panelists speaking of their own experiences with intersex students.

"What is really important is sensitivity...I have had a transgendered student in my class; I asked 'How would you like to be referenced?'" Hussain said. "But what is also important is having an environment that would send out a signal that this is a safe area [for them]."

Understanding the different age ranges of students was also put to the panel, and both Hussein and Wieder said that older students were an asset to the school, because of the wisdom they bring to the community and their effect on their younger peers in class.

Student Charles Randle, a media arts major, told the gathering how his life is better off because of the diversity on campus.

"I make a conscious effort to do contrary action every day, just to allow myself to engage with other cultures or religion," he said. "It's the difference between being in an elevator and not saying anything, or sticking my hand out and saying, 'My name is Chuck, how you doing today?'"

'Facebook'

continued from page 1

Florentino Manzano, dean of enrollment, believes that this move could have the potential to lure students to the campus.

"It could [attract prospective students]. You tell your friend, 'this is where I go to college and it's really cool, and this is what is going on,'" said Manzano. "But most of all it could also yield a lot of positive interaction between students, faculty, staff, and administrators as people log on, and participate in this new way of hanging out."

Currently, Fong and the Public Relations Department will be in command of updating the sites, but over time other Valley branches, like the Outreach and Recruitment Program will come on board.

"This is just another way of how students choose to communicate with each other; we're just going in there too, coming to the 21st century," said Fong.

CORRECTIONS

Due to an editing error last issue, Tom Jacobsmeier was assigned the wrong title in "Smoking Lights Up Debate".

His correct title is 'Vice President of Administrative Services'. Eli Beltran was also incorrectly titled as News Editor, her correct title is 'Staff Writer'. Lastly, the income information accompanying "Cal Grant Slashed" implied that one person earned that amount, however, the income was for a four member household.

'Apple'

continued from page 2

I'm someone who's really demanding, really drives the students, and I've been described almost like a maniac sometimes."

Nakamura cites his cutting edge curriculum, accessibility and his love of his work as reasons for the unexpected win.

Giovanni Trombetta has been in classrooms teaching Italian since 1978, first at UCLA as a teacher's assistant, then at Santa Monica College and later, Valley.

"I enjoy the interaction with the students, seeing their face, the smile of knowing they have learned something they didn't know before," he enthusiastically stated, a smile stretched across his face.

"Students start the program knowing next to nothing about Italian, and by the time they are done, they are able to read in Italian, speak Italian, and enjoy the culture of the language."

From community college student to community college professor, Bill Dauber teaches from experience. Experience being a community college student, and experience from being a reporter.

"It was great to get this award, to be nominated by students, which means the most to me; they're why I'm here," he said. "It was something I'll remember for the rest of my life."

Chances are most faculty will. In total, 108 faculty members won an Apple Award. In the words of Wieder: "Thank you from the bottom of my heart [...] We really, really, really appreciate you."

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Thousands March For Immigrants



ANA ROSA MURILLO / SPECIAL TO THE STAR

GROUP STRENGTH - Although the turnout was much smaller than in recent years more than 8,500 participated in the rally that merged at 1st Street and Broadway according to organizers.



JONATHAN GIBBY, ASSISTANT PHOTO EDITOR / VALLEY STAR

A PUSH FOR CHANGE - Raul Murillo, left, of the political organization Hermandad Mexicana Nacional led the crowd during the May 1 rally for labor and immigration rights in downtown Los Angeles.

JONATHAN GIBBY
ASSISTANT PHOTO EDITOR

Participants waving American and Mexican flags flooded the Streets of downtown Los Angeles May 1 in a peaceful rally urging an end to work-site immigration raids and immigrant rights.

A truck with a live mariachi band led the march of more than 8,500 down Broadway toward city hall. The crowd was mostly Latino, but a large number of Philipino and Japanese immigrants took part, representing Los Angeles' diverse ethnic makeup and the universal struggle for immigrant rights.

The discussion of what to do about the nation's estimated 12 million illegal immigrants has taken main stage in the current race to the White House and has state and local legislators scrambling for a solution for the immigrants who, according to the Sacramento Union, represent about one in every 20 workers of our nation's work force.

The march ended at city hall, where musicians and speakers gave a unified voice to the days rally. The folk music of Chuy Perez, pushing for peace and equality for all people, could be heard over the sounds of the city as the sun set on the peaceful demonstration.



JOHN PHILLIPS / VALLEY STAR

PRIDE - These two spectators stand in front of a large American flag as the crowd marches past them.



JONATHAN GIBBY, ASSISTANT PHOTO EDITOR / VALLEY STAR

PEACE BEAT - A drum circle near the start of Thursday's rally in downtown Los Angeles encouraged participants to dance and sing for change.



JONATHAN GIBBY, ASSISTANT PHOTO EDITOR / VALLEY STAR

UNITY IN MUSIC - The crowd marched down Broadway to city hall. As the sun set behind the Los Angeles skyline, Chuy Perez and other artists united the crowd through their music.